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THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

Christian Principles Essential to a New World Order

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COMMITTEE ON THE WAR
AND THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

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FOREWORD

This booklet is one in a series that will appear from time to time during the next few months under the general heading, The Religious Outlook. These publications are being brought out under the direction of the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook in the hope that they may help to focus attention on some of the larger issues facing the Church after the war.

The Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook was constituted, while the war was still in progress, by the joint action of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the General War-Time Commission of the Churches "to consider the state of religion as affected by the war, with special reference to the duty and opportunity of the churches, and to prepare its findings for submission to the Churches." Full reports of the Committee will be submitted later in the year. In the meantime the present series of booklets issued under the auspices of the Committee, is offered as a preliminary endeavor to emphasize certain phases of the task of the Church that particularly challenge its attention at the present hour.

Communications designed for the Committee may be addressed to the Secretary, Rev. Samuel McCrea Cavert, 105 East 22d Street, New York.

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CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES ESSENTIAL TO A NEW WORLD ORDER

The World War has been a great illumination. The illumination has come, not as the gradual sunrise, but as a blinding flash, in which things long hidden suddenly stand out stark and naked. Some cherished ideas have proved superficial and have vanished in the conflagration; others have proved to be as deep and abiding as the soul of man.

Many distinctions we have made through long years have been blotted out. The distinction between offensive and defensive warfare no longer exists, if we accept the new theory that the only way to defend our nation is to anticipate attack. The distinction between belligerent and neutral our own land found it impossible long to maintain. The difference between combatant and noncombatant disappears when an entire population goes to war. The difference between contraband and legitimate goods vanishes when grain and meat and cotton and oil turn out to be munitions of war.

But one distinction has been written in letters of light upon the firmament. One difference has been etched deep into the conscience of humanity. That is the eter-

nal difference between the pagan and the Christian attitude toward life, between the will-to-power and the will-to-help. In our thinking it is always an advantage to know the worst and to see the worst in action. Now we have seen it—the worst the world ever saw or dreamed—cruelty made scientific, the lust for power buttressed by history and philosophy, the will to plunder and slay masquerading as human progress, pitiless war clothing itself in the garments of a new Messiah. The revulsion of the world against that theory of progress has been the great moral gain of the War. Never before has the pagan theory been so absolutely logical in its formulation, so unrestrained in its action, so protected and glorified by history and science. Men have always held such theories, but shamefacedly and apologetically. Machiavelli was equally ruthless, but he advised prudent concealment of aims. England has much to apologize for in past centuries, but when she was called "perfidious Albion" it was mainly because, if her action was unjust, her professed ideal was still upheld. But German leaders flouted the ideal as well as the actual.

The German attitude toward the world was summed up in one declaration from Maximilian Harden: "Our German manhood does not feminize itself in long peace

—our might shall create a new law in Europe." To quote from a hundred leaders would add nothing except the elaboration of that one pagan idea, that might creates law. Thank God that things have become so clear! We have now seen the irresponsibly sovereign state and what it does to humanity. We have seen secret diplomacy at its best—which is its worst. We have seen what the world comes to when biology replaces ethics, when the cosmic struggle is made the model of human association, when instead of "working out the beast" men adopt the law of the jungle as the law of nations. We have seen the famous balance of power to be as futile as the balance of a top spinning to its fall. We have seen what overtakes cities and dynasties and nations when sympathy is despised as weakness and justice is regarded as an impediment to growth, when the *lex talionis* triumphs over the law of brotherhood. The world has seen this great pagan theory of national development dethroned and crushed and left like the stump of the Philistine Dagon in the presence of the ark of God.

But we of the Christian nations who reject and abhor that theory, have we yet established a Christian theory of the world order? We who justly condemn the German theory

as monstrous, are we saintly in our international relations? We have a fairly consistent Christian ethics for the individual. We have curbed the corporations and made them amenable to social obligation. We are to some extent Christianizing industry and commerce and municipal life. We recognize God in the life of the nation, in all national holidays, proclamations, and legislative assemblies. But the moment we enter the international field we meet two startling facts. The first is that any war, undertaken for any reason whatever, is according to international law perfectly legal. The second is that neutrality, maintained by any nation in the presence of any struggle, is entirely moral.

According to the law of nations that has developed in modern civilization, national sovereignty means the right to make war at any time on any people, and however unprovoked the attack may be, if due formalities are observed, international law cannot condemn one nation for waging war upon another. In the twentieth of the Christian centuries war is perfectly legal and international law affirms the right of any nation to wage it for any cause.

The other fact is no less startling. In the presence of any attack, however atrocious, upon a small state, any neighboring state is

fully within its rights if it remains neutral. If the neighboring state sees nothing to gain by entering the struggle, it may quietly close its eyes to international crime, may complacently say that "the war is three thousand miles away," and may resolve to be neutral in word and deed and thought. That such neutrality may itself be a crime against the world order never occurred to the founders of our system of international law. That all war is legal and all neutrality is internationally moral—this is the astonishing situation revealed by the light of the European conflagration. Unless we change that situation we are not Christian peoples or even forward-looking men. We who have put Christian principles behind home and school and church and are trying to infuse them into the relations of labor and capital must either proceed to write those principles into the world order or must confess the final and overwhelming defeat of the Christian religion.

What are the Christian principles yet to be written into the society of nations? Can we provide a rational and Christian basis for international society? International rivalry, suspicion, hostility, have been based on alleged facts of biology, ethnology, geography, and cosmic development. I covet for the Christian society intellectual foun-

dations at least as strong and deep as those erected by the philosophy of force. The Christian principles we need are not exhortations to brotherly love—they are certain indestructible and eternal truths.

1. The first is this: that we are members one of another. We individuals, associations, corporations, municipalities, nations, are members, united by the lasting bond of participation in a common life. The *feeling* of membership may be present or absent—the *fact* remains. "If the foot shall say, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?" If the insurance company shall say, "I am not of the social order," is it therefore outside the order? If Austria or Spain shall say, "I am not responsible to any world society," is it therefore not responsible?

If we really are members one of another, we shall cherish respect for unlikeness. That one man is of English and another of Irish descent, that one speaks a Saxon and another a Latin language, will not be causes of enmity but means of mutual enrichment. The differences between Orient and Occident are among the precious assets of civilization. If any one of us had lived in China and been subject to Chinese environment, he would undoubtedly write from the top of the page to the bottom and insist on mount-

ing a horse from the right side. The French language, which seems to our troops in France preposterous, is by its clarity and precision far better fitted to be the language of the peace conference than is our own. In the presence of such facts we want not simply toleration but respect. Toleration of others' opinions, modes of speech and life is an unchristian attitude. It implies the condescension of a superior who waives his right to criticize the absurdities of an inferior. Toleration is intolerable to a self-respecting man or nation. The Christian theory of life not only permits but demands differences. The Indian poet, Tagore, sees this when he says: "Respect differences if you would find unity; you shatter differences only to multiply them."

On the foundation of mutual respect we build mutual responsibility. The foreigner, whose very foreignness is something precious, whose very strangeness is the supplement and completion of our partialness, is after all united with us, like islands that meet beneath the estranging sea. But our greatest difficulty is not with the antipodes, or even with the Latin peoples, it is with our English kin whom we misunderstand just because we are so like them. We expect the Chinese, who live in "the land of topsy turvy," to be absurd. But the man who uses

our familiar speech in a curious way, whose accent and intonation are an implicit criticism of ours, whose manners are slightly and therefore irritatingly different—he rasps us, as two notes that are close together in the musical scale make the harshest discord. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" has deep philosophy behind it, for if you can truly love your neighbor, you can love anybody else in the world.

But does not this respect mean simply the old doctrine of the brotherhood of man? Yes, and no. No, if by brotherhood is meant a warm and generous feeling which may vanish tomorrow when neutralized by a more primitive and powerful instinct. Yes, if we mean the clear understanding of a permanent fact. Brotherhood is not sentiment, it is intellectual understanding. Love is not in the last analysis emotion; it is perception—perception of the values under the surface of another personality or behind the strange costume and speech of another people. We cannot like all men, but we can and must love them—that is, perceive and appreciate their value and hold it as a precious possession. To place underneath the world-order the steady perception that all nations are members one of another is the first step in Christianizing the relation of states.

2. The second Christian principle is this: that inequality means not a chance for exploitation, but an opportunity for service. Deep in the teaching of the New Testament is the recognition of the permanent inequalities of men. The assertion of our immortal Declaration that all men are born free and equal was never drawn from the teaching of the Nazarene, and finds no echo in St. Paul or Augustine or Luther. If it means that all should be equal in political rights and economic opportunity, it is magnificently true. But if it means to affirm equality in gifts or capacity or attainment, it runs counter to the whole Christian conception of humanity. The doctrine of brotherhood implies the contrary—brothers are never duplicates. A social club is built on a principle of identity. Its members are chosen because of the same tastes or abilities or financial standing. But a family is built on the principle of unlikeness. In a family some are old and some are young, some are stalwart bread-winners, others in the cradle are simply love-awakeners. But in and through this inequality the whole family is bound together in mutual service. If ever the human society does become one family, and the millennium arrives, there will be as many inequalities in power and ability and development as we see today. Any at-

tempt to lift man by ignoring the differences in men is doomed to failure.

But, as Macauley said, the test of any civilization is its attitude toward the weak and the small. Nations must forever be as unequal in growth and size and capacity as are individuals. There are sixty-eight states in the world today, each claiming to be an independent entity. Does any man suppose that in a society of nations all sixty-eight can have equal voting power? Can the sixty-eight ever become equals? Can Siberia ever claim the leadership that belongs of right to Britain? But Britain's greatness is, above all, greatness of obligation. If she uses her power to crush, to delude, to rob, to manipulate, she is an enemy of the human race. If she uses her power to serve the little states, and by her navy protects the rights of man, she is helping to realize the noble prophecy of Shakespeare in Henry VIII:

> "Those about her
> From her shall read the perfect ways of honor,
> And by those claim their greatness, not by blood."

The exploitation of colonies, the enrichment of the victor by the spoliation of the conquered, the subjection of the tropics in order that they may yield ivory or rubber

or spices to the temperate zone, the forcing of opium on any people whatsoever—these are crimes whose enormity is exactly measured not by the harm done to the weak but by the wealth and power and knowledge of the superior nation, which constitute its obligation to the weak ones of the earth.

3. A third principle is this: security depends in the last analysis on moral force, for in the end moral force always conquers physical force. "Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right." Nothing is so unsettling to a world order as the commission of an international robbery. It curseth him that loses and him that takes. The running sore of Alsace-Lorraine has for fifty years been an object lesson to the world.

I know men say, "Reason as you will, talk about right and justice as you choose, at last it comes down to bayonets and the nation that has the most of them wins." No assertion could be more baseless than that. The last five years have shown its falsity. The nation that had the best trained army in Europe has lost. The nation that had the best munitions of war, and the most of them, has lost, because against her was the moral force of civilization. The moral force finally won physical support, but the nation that trusted in

physical force could win no moral support from any other nation under heaven. "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just." And he whose quarrel is unjust will not be ultimately saved by all the armies and navies of the world. Germany unloosed the submarine against passenger ships, honestly believing that such a physical weapon could bring victory, calmly ignoring the moral indignation she thus aroused against herself. Germany's sinking of the Lusitania was equivalent to adding a dozen dreadnaughts to the English fleet. Germany's bombing of defenseless English towns probably added a million men to the English armies. Physical force never wins any permanent victory unless that force be the transient expression of a righteous purpose. The will to power has proved powerless; the will to help gets help from the whole round world.

4. The last Christian principle I wish to mention is the universal application of the law of love. Nothing is more ominous for civilization than the various ingenious attempts to sidetrack the teaching of Christianity and ignore it in the discussion of international affairs. Those who say that Christ's teaching was meant only for individuals, those who belittle it as based on

"end ethics," those who explain it away as Oriental exaggeration, are merely attempting to supersede Christ as the moral leader of mankind. During the War it was gravely proposed to declare a *moratorium* of Christian ethics until happier days should return. I, for one, have no use for a religion which can be applied only in days of sunshine and has no application in time of storm. I cannot proclaim a moral law which applies to two boys fighting in the street and has no reference to two nations struggling in the fields of France or meeting in conference at Versailles. Either the teaching of Jesus applies now and here, or it applies nowhere and never. We have no use for a law of gravitation which applies to a pebble on the beach but cannot explain the revolution of the stars. We reject any Christian ethic unless it is universal in its scope and can guide a hundred million associated citizens as truly as the single peasant in his cottage. "Thou shalt love" is a law which has greatest binding force upon the greatest people, and finds its clearest application in the desperate emergencies of international struggle.

Can we love our neighbor while we fight him? The answer is to be found in the daily life of every hospital and in the ethics of the medical profession. When a surgeon plunges the cold steel into quivering human flesh

he does it as the finest possible expression of sympathy and mercy. He is cutting out the cancer that he may save the human life. The cutting process is the highest possible union of science and sympathy, the complete expression of the law of love. The two million Americans who went overseas were not forsaking Christianity because of dire emergency—they were marching "with the cross of Jesus going on before." They were cutting out of the German soul the cancerous growth that had poisoned her life and endangered the life of the world. Having done it, we must now proceed with the rehabilitation of the world and the construction of a social order in which such diseases shall be checked at their first appearance. We must study preventive measures. Having won the War by moral force, we must rebuild the world on moral principles. Having shown that the nation that appeals unto Cæsar goes down, we must show that the society that appeals to the Nazarene steadily rises in peace and power and happiness. It is safer to be Christian than pagan. The best security league is a league of human service. The best society of national defense is the united and purified Church of Christ. The only fortress that can never be taken is the City of God.